

## House Republican Press Release

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### **Rep. Hovey: Protect Homeowners: Reform CT's Eminent Domain Law**



Property rights in Monroe, Newtown and elsewhere in Connecticut are under assault as never before and it is essential that the General Assembly act soon to reform the state's eminent domain law to restore the protection that was denied to homeowners in a recent U. S. Supreme Court decision, state Representative DebraLee Hovey, R-

112<sup>th</sup> District, said today.

The court ruled that Connecticut's eminent domain statute, which allows municipalities to seize private property to make way for economic development projects, is constitutional, but indicated the state legislature could delete that provision from the law if it so desired, said Representative Hovey, who attended an informational hearing on eminent domain reform that was held at the state capitol today.

"Property rights are one of the most fundamental of the freedoms we enjoy under our Constitution," Representative Hovey said. "Connecticut's eminent domain law has diminished that right by allowing the taking of private property for economic development projects. It is simply deplorable for private property to be seized by the state or by municipalities for any purpose other than traditional public works projects, such as the construction of roads, bridges and schools. And, when property is taken for legitimate public projects like these, the state and its municipalities must fairly compensate citizens for their losses."

"If the state legislature does not act soon to protect property rights, other Connecticut towns may take advantage of the Supreme Court's decision and attempt to seize more people's homes for economic development projects to maximize their tax base," Representative Hovey said.

Representative Hovey said she supports a House Republican initiative to introduce eminent domain reform legislation within the next few weeks if a special session of the General Assembly is scheduled - or shortly after the 2006 legislative session convenes if the General Assembly's Democrat majority refuses to allow the proposal to be taken up sooner.

The House Republican measure would simply delete the provision in the existing law that permits development agencies to seize property for economic development projects.